THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Government increased the customs duty on imports of sugar thrice in the financial year 1998-99. On 28.4.98, Government imposed 5% customs duty and countervailing duty (CVD) of Rs. 850 per tonne. On 14.1.99, Government increased customs duty at imports of sugar from 5% to 20%. With the change in the customs duty rate structure in the budget proposals for the financial year 1999-2000, the customs duty on imports of sugar was revised to 25% along with surcharge of 10% w.e.f. 28.2.99. Hence, the effective rate of protection to sugar industry comes to 27.5% plus countervailing duty of Rs. 850/- per tonne.

(b)During the financial year 1999-2000, the published data of DGCI&S Calcutta is available for the period April to August, 1999. During this period imports of sugar are provisionally estimated at 5,59,254 tonnes of sugar.

(c)The quantity of imports of sugar is not very large with reference to production and consumption of sugar. Inspite of the imports, the domestic sugar prices have remained fairly stable.

Recognition of Satriya Dance form as classical

418. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sangeet Natak Academi has initiated necessary ground work for recognition of Satriya Dance form as classical, in line with Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri, Kuchipudi and Odissi;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be declared as classical form of dance;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of various grants, documentation, awards and other forms of support extended by Government, as well as the Academy, for preservation and augmentation of this important segment of performing arts heritage of the country?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (d) The Sangeet Natak Akademi has informed that it does not any more follow the policy of formally declaring any art as classical or otherwise. The Akademi has taken note that dance and music forms of Satriya constitute an important segment of the art heritage of our country. During the recent past Sangeet Natak Akademi had given financial assistance to two organizations. The Akademi has video/audio recordings of 15 programms of Satriya Dance and Allied Forms. Further the Akademi has honoured one artist with Akademi fellowship and eight artists with SNA awards.